

motionless, legs apart, head turned towards a dark corner and bills touching the ground.

There can be no doubt that some of the peculiar habits of Kiwis are means of protection from natural enemies.

New Zealand possessing no indigenous mammals or birds which could possibly do harm to birds the size of the Apteryx, these habits, as well as the protective colouring, must be looked upon as survivals from a long distant past, probably from the time when these islands formed a part of a vast continental mass of land. Nothing very definite is yet known on this subject, but some conclusions may perhaps be drawn from the unusual behaviour of the birds in presence of domesticated animals, the cat and the dog. Of my cat, the two birds which form the subject of this paper took no notice whatever. Of this fact the cat was soon so well aware that he often invited himself to dinner, taking for his share the best pieces of meat within easy reach of their bills, without being in the least interfered with. Neither did the birds take any notice of my dog, a full-grown Collie, while he on his part seemed greatly interested in their strange doings. When they were both in their yard he would often sit near the wire and watch them as they passed and repassed him in their usual tour round their yard. Although they often passed almost near enough to touch him, they did not show any sign of alarm. This utter absence of instinctive fear may be an indication that the natural enemies, which preyed upon the ancestors of the Kiwis, were not representatives of the order of carnivorous mammals.

---

**An Ascent of the Blue Wren.**—When near the River Mersey on the morning of 28th July, I noticed a male Wren (*Malurus cyaneus*) in full plumage sitting upon a gum stump. When I was within a few yards he suddenly rose vertically into the air to the height of 16 or 18 feet, singing the while, like a miniature Skylark. He then descended in a slanting line to a near-by fence, from which he rose in a minute or two to repeat the performance. This trait in our bird was new to me, although it is, of course, an almost everyday sight to see one singing on top of a spray of tea-tree or other scrub in early spring. Sometimes the female will suddenly mount to a similar point of vantage and sing a hurried strain. The morning when the ascent occurred was very fine, with brisk south-east breeze, and this no doubt contributed to the Wren's unusual winter display. The same day, about noon, near Latrobe I noticed another *Malurus* in brown and grey, but with a mottled appearance about the cheeks and mantle, as if the colour was just breaking through; this I took to be a young male just coming into his tints.—H. STUART DOVE, W. Devonport, Tasmania, 23/8/1922.